

2025-2026 TPP ANNUAL REPORT

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

1 Relationship..1 Employer..1 Job..1 Lifelong, Productive & Engaged Teammate at a Time



US NAVY TALENT PIPELINE PROGRAM

JULY 1, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2026



MISSION

The US Navy Talent Pipeline Program TEAM will energize and engage the American economy by creating and sustaining a maritime industrial base focused talent pipelines enabling EMPLOYERS to re-capitalize their workforce through recruiting, hiring, on-boarding, and retaining workforce members for 1-year as productive and engaged new employees.



STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

Five Years of Growth, Retention, and Employer Impact

The US Navy Talent Pipeline Program has grown from a 39-employer pilot into a national workforce initiative supporting 618 employers across 39 states and generating 21,786 hires. Five years of results demonstrate that an employer-centered model can scale while maintaining resilient retention—and that workforce stability improves when recruiting, onboarding, frontline leadership, and first-year measurement operate as one connected system.

618 EMPLOYER PARTNERS	39 STATES REACHED	21,786 HIRES SINCE 2021	72% PROGRAM RETENTION
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WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

GROWTH WITHOUT EROSION 39 → 618 <i>Nearly 16× employer growth</i> Completed-cohort retention remained within a 68%–72% band.	WHEN ATTRITION HAPPENS 50% 75% <i>By Day 90 By Day 180</i> Early intervention is essential, but engagement must continue through one year.	STRONG SYSTEMS = STRONG OUTCOMES 84% 83% 83% <i>First Day Fit Leader</i> The strongest practices connect selection, entry experience, and leader accountability.
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WHAT THIS MEANS FOR EMPLOYERS

1 SELECT Define candidate fit and establish realistic expectations before the offer.	2 BUILD Standardize the first day, skills training, check-ins, and career conversations through one year.	3 LEAD Use the 5th Metric Scorecard to track progress, identify risk, and reinforce leader accountability.
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STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY TPP has proven the model can grow. The next opportunity is to make strong retention outcomes consistently repeatable across every employer.

Data note: Program-wide and completed-cohort retention represent different populations. The 2025–2027 cohort remains in progress, and its results will change as additional employees reach one year.

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT | NATIONAL ROLLOUT PROGRAM REACH, GROWTH & PERFORMANCE

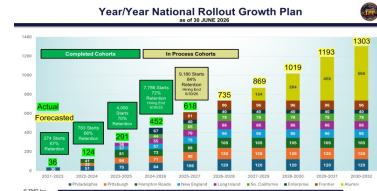
America's Talent Pipeline Program "National Reach"



Employers: 618	States Impacted: 39	Hires to Date: 21,786	1st YR Retention: 72%	Employers at 80% Retention or Higher: 329 as of 6/30/26
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TPP Total Program Data 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2026



	2021-2023	2022-2024	2023-2025	2024-2026	2025-2027 (In Process)	
Total Employers	39	124	291	452	618	
1 Yr Retention >= 80%	29	51	108	190	329	Core Outcome Metric
1 Yr Retention >= 50% < 80%	6	25	105	156	117	
1 Yr Retention < 50%	4	12	39	42	7	
No Hires * Includes WD	0	36	39	64	165	Current to Date
Total Hires	274	788	4,135	7,409	9,180	21,786
1st YR Retention	71%	68%	70%	72%	TBD	72%

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The US Navy Talent Pipeline Program has grown from 39 employers in 2021 to 618 employers across 39 states, generating 21,786 hires through June 2026. Five years of results demonstrate that an employer-centered workforce model can scale while maintaining resilient retention—and that workforce stability improves when employers connect recruiting, selection, onboarding, training, frontline leadership, first-year engagement, and measurement into one disciplined talent system.

What We Have Learned

- **Scale and retention can advance together.** Completed-cohort retention remained between 68% and 72% as the program expanded nationally.
- **The first six months matter most.** Half of first-year departures occurred within 90 days and 75% by day 180, making early intervention essential.
- **Retention is a connected system.** World Class First Day, Best Athlete Profile, and leader retention practices show the value of aligning selection, entry, supervision, and accountability.

What This Means for Employers

- **Standardize the first-year experience.** Set accurate expectations before hire and sustain structured onboarding, skill development, check-ins, and career conversations through one year.
- **Make supervisors accountable for retention.** Use the 5th Metric Scorecard to track new-hire progress, identify emerging risks, reinforce leader routines, and measure first-year outcomes.
- **Use data to focus improvement.** Analyze retention by source, trade, supervisor, shift, tenure milestone, and departure reason—then prioritize where high volume and performance gaps intersect.
- **BOTTOM LINE: TPP has proven the model can grow.** The next opportunity is to help every employer build a repeatable talent system that converts hiring activity into productive, retained employees.

Data note: The 2025–2027 cohort remains in progress; current hiring and retention results are preliminary and will change as additional employees reach one year.

ABOUT THE DATA

The analysis in this report is based on information provided by employers participating in America's Talent Pipeline Program (TPP). Data are collected through the program's employer reporting process and reflect hiring activity, recruiting sources, workforce demographics, implementation of talent-management practices, and employee retention outcomes.

Unless otherwise noted, the report covers program activity from **July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2026**. Because employees must have sufficient time to reach their first-year anniversary, retention analyses include only hires who were eligible to complete one full year of employment by the applicable measurement date. More recent hires are included in overall hiring totals but are excluded from completed first-year retention calculations.

- **Total Number of Eligible Hires: 12,606 (Hiring Period: 7/1/21-6/30/25)**
- **Total Number of Hires: 21,786 (Hiring Period: 7/1/21-6/30/26)**

The dataset represents employers of different sizes, capabilities, geographic locations, and levels of program maturity. During the reporting period, TPP expanded from an initial cohort of 39 employers to **618 participating employers across 39 states**. These employers support a range of skilled trades, manufacturing, engineering, logistics, leadership, and front-office indirect-labor positions across the defense industrial base.

Employer Population by Size

The participating employer population is primarily composed of small and midsize businesses:

- **307 small employers** with 50 or fewer employees — **50%**
- **259 midsize employers** with 51–350 employees — **42%**
- **52 large employers** with 351–1,000 employees — **8%**

Overall, **92% of participating employers are small or midsize organizations**. This distribution is important when interpreting the findings because many of these employers operate with limited internal recruiting, human-resources, onboarding, and workforce-development capacity. It also demonstrates TPP's ability to support employers across a wide range of organizational sizes.

Data Considerations

- Data are provided directly by participating employers and captured, reviewed, and tracked monthly by their assigned TPP Network Coaches.
- Results reflect participating employers and should not automatically be interpreted as representative of the entire U.S. defense industrial base.
- Employer participation and reporting volume vary by cohort, region, company size, occupation, and year in the program.
- Retention results are based on hires who had reached—or had sufficient time to reach—their one-year employment milestone.
- Percentages may vary slightly because of rounding, incomplete fields, or updates submitted after an earlier reporting period.
- Observed relationships between employer practices and retention indicate associations; they do not, by themselves, establish direct causation.

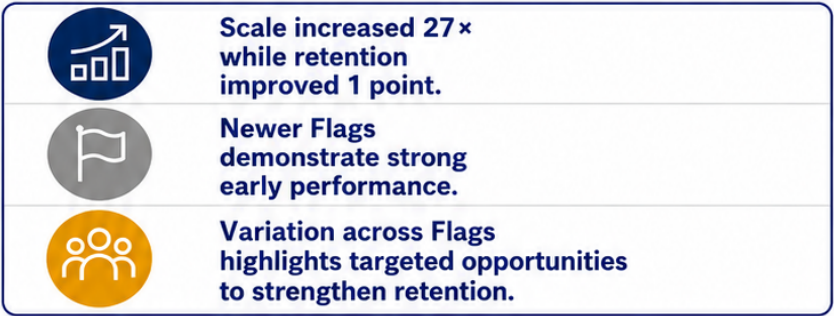
1-YEAR RETENTION: SCALE WITH RESILIENCE



GROWTH ACROSS HIRING PERIODS



LATEST-PERIOD RETENTION BY FLAG (2024-25)



Hiring periods: July 1–June 30 | Retention measured at one year

ANALYSIS OF TPP GROWTH AND SCALE FROM 7/1/21-6/30/26



27×
ELIGIBLE-HIRE
GROWTH



+83%
RETAINED WORKERS
VS. PRIOR PERIOD

Executive Summary

The Talent Pipeline Program expanded from 274 employees eligible to reach one year in the 2021–2022 hiring period to 7,409 in 2024–2025—approximately 27-fold growth. One-year successes increased from 194 to 5,323 over the same period. Despite the rapid expansion of employers, geography, and hiring activity, retention remained within a narrow 68%–72% range and reached a series high of 72% in the latest period.

The results demonstrate that TPP can scale without a corresponding decline in overall retention. The next phase of performance should focus less on proving the model can grow and more on making strong outcomes consistently repeatable across Flags and employers. The latest Flag-level range of 65%–82% shows both the opportunity and the roadmap: identify the employer practices supporting stronger results, transfer them deliberately, and use targeted coaching where systems are less mature.

Key Findings

- **Scale increased without eroding retention.** Eligible hires grew by more than 7,100 across the four periods, while retention remained resilient despite the program's increasing complexity and reach.
- **The latest cohort delivered the strongest total result.** The 2024–2025 period produced 5,323 one-year successes—2,415 more than the prior period and an 83% year-over-year increase in retained workers.
- **Newer Flags demonstrate that strong performance can develop early.** Enterprise reached 82%; Long Island and New England 76%; Southern California 74%; and Frontier 72% in the latest period.
- **Variation points to system-level improvement opportunities.** The 17-point spread between the lowest- and highest-performing Flags is actionable evidence for focused coaching, practice transfer, and continuous improvement—not a reason to pursue identical tactics in every labor market.

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT | PROGRAM GROWTH & ONE-YEAR RETENTION

What This Means for Employers

- **Manage retention as an operating system.** Connect candidate fit, realistic job expectations, selection, onboarding, leader engagement, training, and follow-up rather than treating turnover as a recruiting-only issue.
- **Use first-year data to locate breakdowns.** Review retention by source, supervisor, role, shift, tenure milestone, and departure reason to identify where the employee experience is failing.
- **Make frontline leaders accountable for the first year.** Give supervisors clear expectations and practical routines for early check-ins, coaching, skill progression, recognition, and issue resolution.
- **Standardize the essentials, then adapt locally.** Preserve a common core of proven practices while adjusting execution for the employer's workforce, labor market, production environment, and maturity.

BOTTOM LINE: Growth has validated the reach of the model. Consistency across employer systems is the principal opportunity for stronger program wide retention.

Data note: Hiring periods reflect employees eligible to reach the one-year milestone. Retention is calculated as one-year successes divided by eligible hires and rounded to whole numbers. Flag-level results should be interpreted alongside cohort maturity and local operating conditions.

WHERE RETAINED TALENT COMES FROM

One-Year Retention by Hiring Source



THE SOURCES THAT SHAPE THE RESULT

HIRING SOURCE	ELIGIBLE HIRES	ONE-YEAR RETENTION %
 Social Media / Internet	4,728 hires 	 70%
 Employee Referrals	2,797 hires 	 76%
 Recruiting Agencies	1,052 hires 	 70%
 Temp Agencies	738 hires 	 66%
 CTE Programs	635 hires 	 73%
 Recovered / Returns	501 hires 	 79%

Selected sources shown; full detail available in supporting analysis.

KEY FINDINGS

 REFERRALS COMBINE SCALE AND QUANTITY Employee referrals supplied 2,797 hires and achieved 76% retention—4 points above the program average.	 RETURNING TALENT IS HIGH-VALUE Recovered and returning workers achieved 79% retention, the strongest result among higher-volume sources.	 TEMP AGENCIES TRAIL Temp agencies produced 738 eligible hires but retained only 66%—6 points below the program average.
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SYSTEMS DRIVE RETENTION
Source matters, but onboarding, leadership, and the new-hire experience determine whether employees stay.

Source: TPP Program Inception | Hiring: 7/1/21—6/30/25 | Retention: 7/1/22—6/30/26

ANALYSIS OF ONE-YEAR RETENTION BY PIPELINE

Executive Summary

Across the Talent Pipeline Program, 8,958 of 12,606 eligible hires reached one year, producing an overall retention rate of approximately 71%. The remaining 3,648 employees—29% of eligible hires—departed before reaching the milestone.

Program-wide attrition is not driven by a single recruiting source. Results reflect both the retention quality of each pipeline and the number of employees it supplies. High-volume sources have the greatest influence on overall performance, while smaller pipelines provide promising—but not yet scalable—signals.

Social Media/Internet is the largest pipeline, producing 4,728 eligible hires and 3,306 one-year successes. Its 70% retention rate is slightly below the program average, making it a significant improvement opportunity. Employee referrals offer the strongest combination of scale and performance, with 2,797 eligible hires, 2,131 successes, and 76% retention. Together, these two pipelines represent approximately 60% of all eligible hires.

Key Findings

- **Employee referrals combine scale and quality.** With 2,797 eligible hires and 76% retention, referrals outperform the program average while supplying substantial hiring volume. Referred candidates may enter with a clearer understanding of the job and workplace.
- **Social Media/Internet presents the largest improvement opportunity.** This pipeline accounts for approximately 38% of eligible hires. Even a modest increase above its current 70% retention rate would meaningfully improve total one-year success.
- **Recovered and returning talent is a high-value pipeline.** Recovered/Returns achieved 79% retention across 501 eligible hires, supporting formal strategies to reconnect with former employees and previously qualified candidates.
- **CTE partnerships provide dependable talent.** Career and Technical Education programs achieved 73% retention across 635 eligible hires, slightly exceeding the program average.
- **Agency-dependent pipelines warrant attention.** Recruiting agencies retained 70% of eligible hires, compared with 66% for temporary agencies. Together, these sources supplied 1,790 eligible hires, making the performance gap operationally important.
- **Smaller pipelines show promise but lack scale.** Military and Veteran hires achieved 86% retention, College Departures 80%, and Retirees 78%. However, these sources represent only 133 eligible hires combined and require further testing.

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT | UNDERSTANDING TALENT SOURCES

What This Means For Employers

New-hire attrition is an employer-system outcome—not simply a sourcing problem. Recruiting channels determine who enters the organization, but the employer’s talent system shapes whether those employees succeed and remain.

Employers should focus on four priorities:

1. **Strengthen high-volume pipelines.** Improvements to Social Media/Internet and employee-referral hires will have the greatest program-wide effect because these sources account for approximately 60% of eligible hires.
2. **Create a consistent experience across every source.** Candidates should receive accurate job expectations, structured selection, effective onboarding, trained frontline leadership, and deliberate 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up.
3. **Expand high-performing pipelines deliberately.** Formalize referral and returning-talent strategies, strengthen CTE partnerships, and test whether promising smaller sources can sustain results at greater scale.
4. **Hold recruiting partners accountable for fit.** Evaluate agencies using candidate quality, expectation alignment, early attrition, and one-year retention—not only hiring volume and time to fill.

BOTTOM LINE: The greatest opportunity is not simply finding a better source of candidates. It is building a reliable employer operating system that consistently converts hires from every pipeline into successful, retained employees.

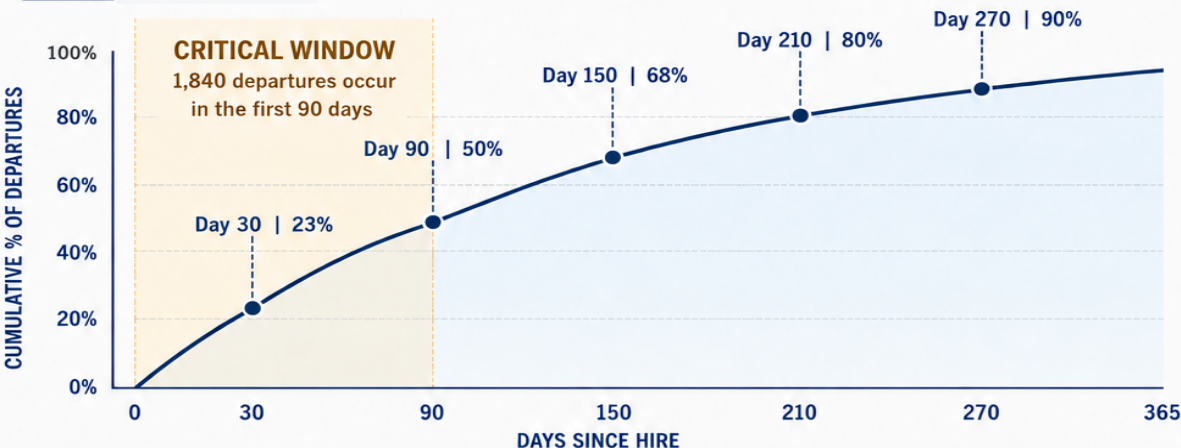
Data note: TPP program inception. Hiring period: 7/1/21–6/30/25. Retention period: 7/1/22–6/30/26. Percentages are rounded to whole numbers.

WHEN AND WHY NEW HIRES LEAVE

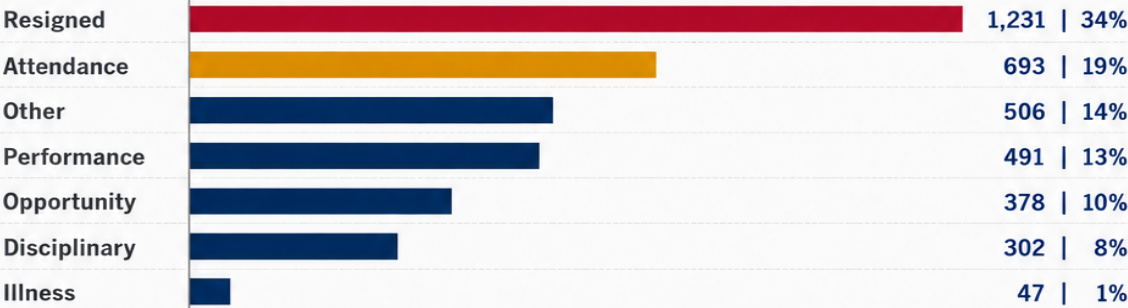
Timing and drivers of first-year attrition

3,648

TOTAL DEPARTURES



WHY EMPLOYEES LEAVE



HALF LEAVE BY DAY 90

Early onboarding and supervisor engagement are the highest-leverage intervention points.



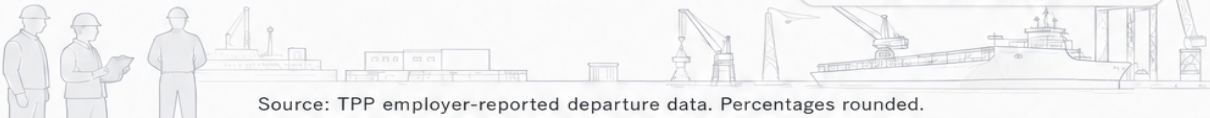
RESIGNATIONS LEAD

Voluntary resignations account for one in three departures.



ACT EARLY AND BE CONSISTENT

Use a structured onboarding process for the first 180 days, followed by periodic check-in interviews throughout the next 180 days.



Source: TPP employer-reported departure data. Percentages rounded.

ANALYSIS OF TIMING AND DRIVERS OF FIRST YEAR RETENTION

Executive Summary

New-hire attrition is concentrated early but remains a year-long retention challenge. Across 3,648 first-year departures, 50% occurred within the first 90 days, 75% by day 180, and 80% by day 210. This pattern establishes the first six months as the primary intervention window while also demonstrating the need for consistent engagement throughout the remainder of the employee's first year.

Resignations were the leading departure reason, accounting for 1,231 departures—or approximately 34% of all attrition. Attendance was the second-largest driver at 693 departures, followed by Other at 506 and Performance at 491. Together, resignations and attendance accounted for 53% of all first-year departures, making employee commitment, job expectations, reliability, and early workplace experience central retention priorities.

Key Findings

- **Early attrition is a system-level challenge.** Half of all first-year departures occurred within 90 days. This concentration suggests that many retention outcomes are shaped well before an employee becomes fully established in the organization. Recruiting accuracy, expectation-setting, supervisor engagement, first-day execution, training, and early feedback all influence whether a new hire develops confidence and commitment.
- **Resignations are the largest source of attrition.** Approximately one in three departures was recorded as a resignation. While voluntary departures may have multiple underlying causes, their scale warrants closer examination. Employers should use structured exit and stay interviews to identify whether employees are leaving because of job fit, leadership, scheduling, compensation, transportation, workplace culture, insufficient training, or competing opportunities.
- **Attendance problems emerge quickly.** Attendance accounted for approximately 19% of all departures, with 57% of attendance-related departures occurring within the first 90 days. Early attendance issues may reflect unclear expectations, transportation or childcare barriers, schedule misalignment, disengagement, or poor job fit. Consistent attendance standards should be communicated during recruiting and reinforced from orientation forward.
- **Performance and disciplinary departures also develop early.** Approximately 51% of performance departures and 51% of disciplinary departures occurred within 90 days. Employers should distinguish between employees who lack the required capability, those who have not received sufficient instruction, and those whose behaviors do not align with workplace expectations. Clear standards, skills-based training, documented coaching, and timely feedback can reduce avoidable losses.
- **The risk continues beyond onboarding.** Although attrition is front-loaded, 25% of departures occurred after day 180. Retention practices should therefore extend beyond a traditional 30-, 60-, or 90-day onboarding plan. Employees continue to assess their fit, development opportunities, leadership, and future with the organization throughout the first year.

What This Means for Employers

- **BEFORE DAY 1:** Use realistic job previews; confirm schedule, transportation and attendance requirements; validate fit before the offer.
- **DAYS 1-90:** Deliver a consistent first day; maintain frequent supervisor contact; conduct fit/skills checks and act quickly on warning signs.
- **DAYS 91-180:** Continue structured check-ins; recognize progress; discuss career paths; use stay conversations to identify emerging risks.

BOTTOM LINE: Retention cannot be secured through orientation alone. It requires a consistent first-year process that establishes expectations early, builds employee capability, identifies problems before they become departures, and sustains meaningful supervisor engagement.

Data Note: Analysis includes 3,648 departures occurring within the first 365 days of employment. Departure reasons reflect the categories recorded by participating employers. Percentages are rounded and may not total 100%. The "Other" category may include multiple circumstances not captured by the primary departure classifications.

1-YEAR RETENTION BY TRADE: WHERE TALENT STAYS



Retention measured at one year | Percentages rounded to whole numbers

ANALYSIS 12,606 ELIGIBLE HIRES ACROSS 17 TRADE CATEGORIES

Executive Summary

Across the Talent Pipeline Program, 8,958 of 12,606 eligible hires remained employed through their one-year milestone, producing an overall retention rate of 71%. The results demonstrate that retention varies considerably by trade—from 58% among riggers to 87% in Engineering & Design and Project/Program Management.

Professional and technical roles generally achieve the strongest retention, while several high-volume production trades fall below the program average. Because General Manufacturing, Machinists, Support, and Welders account for 58% of all eligible hires, their performance has a disproportionate effect on program-wide outcomes. Improving retention in these large talent pipelines offers the greatest opportunity to increase the total number of employees reaching one year.

The variation among trades should not be interpreted as an unavoidable feature of the labor market. Job demands, candidate availability, and workforce competition differ by occupation, but employer practices—including candidate fit, realistic job expectations, onboarding, supervisor engagement, skills development, and early intervention—remain critical drivers of retention.

Key Findings

- **Professional and technical roles lead retention.** Engineering & Design and Project/Program Management achieved the highest retention rates at 87%, followed by Technology at 84%. These results suggest that clearly defined career paths, specialized skill alignment, competitive employment conditions, and structured professional development may strengthen employee commitment.
- **Front-office indirect labor and several skilled roles outperform the average.** Operations Leadership retained 78% of eligible hires, Mechanics retained 77%, front-office Support retained 76%, and Electricians retained 75%. Strong retention is therefore achievable across professional, indirect labor, and skilled-trade positions.
- **High-volume categories shape the overall result.** General Manufacturing, Machinists, Support, and Welders account for approximately 7,315 eligible hires—58% of the program total. General Manufacturing, Machinists, and Welders fall below the 71% average, making these production trades the most consequential opportunities for improvement.
- **General Manufacturing offers the largest opportunity.** The program's largest category included 3,239 eligible hires but achieved only 64% retention. Even a modest improvement would meaningfully increase the number of employees reaching one year.
- **Smaller trades may face distinct challenges.** Riggers recorded the lowest retention at 58%, while Fitters retained 64%. These results may reflect occupation-specific issues involving job expectations, working conditions, supervision, compensation, or career progression.

What This Means for Employers

- **Treat retention as a workforce-system outcome.** Trade differences should prompt a review of recruiting messages, candidate fit, onboarding, supervisor practices, skill development, and early-tenure feedback—not an assumption that attrition is inherent to the occupation.
- **Prioritize volume and gap together.** Begin with General Manufacturing, Machinists, Welders, and Support, where even modest process improvements can affect the greatest number of employees.
- **Transfer practices from stronger categories.** Examine the expectation-setting, career visibility, leader engagement, and skill progression used in Engineering & Design, Technology, and Project / Program Management, then adapt those practices to frontline roles.
- **Segment early-tenure interventions by trade.** Use trade-specific realistic job previews, fit interviews, first-day standards, 30/60/90-day assessments, and supervisor scorecards to address the distinct reasons people leave.

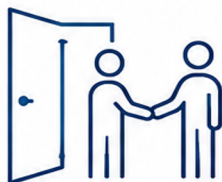
BOTTOM LINE: Improving retention in a few high-volume production trades can materially strengthen workforce stability, reduce replacement costs, and expand the productive capacity available to the Defense Industrial Base.

Data note: Retention reflects the share of one-year-eligible hires recorded as one-year successes. Percentages are rounded to whole numbers. Results describe observed program outcomes and do not, by themselves, establish why differences exist. Small trade populations may produce fewer stable percentages and should be interpreted with eligible-hire counts.

THE TOOLS BEHIND STRONGER RETENTION



Top-performing practices associated with first-year retention



84%

**WORLD CLASS
FIRST DAY**

Make the first
experience deliberate.



83%

**BEST ATHLETE
PROFILE**

Define success before
recruiting.



83%

**LEADER RETENTION
TRAINING + 5TH METRIC**

Make frontline leaders
accountable.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR EMPLOYERS



FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

A prepared, welcoming
first day sets expectations
and builds early
commitment.



FIT STARTS BEFORE THE HIRE

Clear success profiles
improve consistency in
recruiting, selection,
and placement.



LEADERS OWN RETENTION

Retention strengthens
when supervisors are
trained, measured, and
actively engaged.



Retention is not one activity—it is a connected employer system.



Data note: Rates reflect observed outcomes among employers using each tool.
Results indicate association, not causation; employers may use multiple tools.

ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS AND FIRST YEAR RETENTION

Executive Summary

Employers using TPP's structured talent practices consistently demonstrate strong first-year retention. Across the nine tools analyzed, retention ranged from 77% to 84%, with eight associated with rates of at least 80%.

The three highest-performing practices—World Class First Day (84%), Best Athlete Profile (83%), and Leader New Hire Retention Training with 5th Metric Scorecard implementation (83%)—address different stages of the employee journey. Together, they show that retention is not driven by a single activity, but by a connected employer system that aligns hiring, onboarding, frontline leadership, and accountability.

Key Findings

- **First impressions matter.** World Class First Day produced the highest observed retention rate at 84%. An organized and welcoming first day builds confidence, establishes expectations, and creates an early connection with the supervisor, team, and company mission.
- **Fit begins before the hire.** Employers using the Best Athlete Profile achieved 83% retention. Defining the attributes, behaviors, capabilities, and motivations required for success creates consistency across recruiting, interviewing, selection, and onboarding.
- **Frontline leaders own retention.** Leader New Hire Retention Training and 5th Metric Scorecard implementation were associated with 83% retention. Supervisors improve outcomes through regular check-ins, early problem-solving, recognition, and accountability for the new-hire experience.
- **The practices work as a system.** The highest-performing tools influence three critical stages: selecting the right person, creating a strong entry experience, and providing effective frontline support.

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT | WHAT DRIVES RETENTION

What This Means for Employers

Employers should avoid treating retention as a single initiative or an issue owned solely by human resources. Sustainable improvement requires a repeatable system connecting workforce planning, recruiting, selection, onboarding, training, frontline leadership, follow-up, and measurement.

Employers should focus on three questions:

- Did we clearly define and select the right person?
- Did we provide an organized and welcoming entry into the company?
- Did the frontline leader actively support the employee's success?

Standardizing these practices—and holding leaders accountable at every stage—can improve the employee experience, reduce preventable turnover, and strengthen first-year retention.

BOTTOM LINE: First-year retention improves when employers treat it as a connected system—selecting the right person, delivering a strong first-day experience, and holding frontline leaders accountable for each new hire's success.

Data Note: Retention rates reflect observed outcomes among employers using each tool. Results demonstrate association and should not be interpreted as proof that an individual tool caused the reported retention rate. Employers may use multiple tools simultaneously, and results may also be influenced by employer size, hiring volume, labor-market conditions, implementation maturity, and other organizational factors.

FIVE YEARS OF LEARNING AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR EMPLOYERS

Executive Summary

Five years of Talent Pipeline Program data demonstrate that sustainable workforce growth depends on more than increasing hiring activity. Employers achieve stronger first-year retention when they manage recruiting, selection, onboarding, training, frontline leadership, and employee engagement as one connected system. The findings also show that the greatest opportunities occur early in the employee journey and within high-volume recruiting pipelines and production trades. For employers, the path forward is clear: establish realistic expectations before hiring, standardize the first-year experience, make frontline leaders accountable for new-hire success, and use retention data to continuously strengthen the talent system.

What We Have Learned

Five years of program data demonstrate that workforce performance is not determined by recruiting activity alone. Employers achieve stronger results when they manage the entire employee journey—from defining the right candidate through the employee's first year.

TPP's experience points to six major lessons:

1. **The TPP Model can scale without sacrificing outcomes.** TPP expanded from 39 employers in 2021 to 618 employers across 39 states, while completed-cohort retention remained within a relatively narrow range. Growth does not inherently weaken retention when employers maintain disciplined talent practices.
2. **Retention is a system-level outcome.** No single recruiting source, tool, or onboarding activity determines whether an employee remains. Candidate fit, realistic expectations, selection, first-day execution, training, supervisor engagement, and follow-up work together to shape the outcome.
3. **The first six months are the critical intervention window.** Half of first-year departures occurred within 90 days and 75% by day 180. Early experiences strongly influence retention, but the remaining departures show that engagement must continue throughout the first year.
4. **Frontline leaders are critical to retention.** Leaders are responsible for translating employer practices into the employee experience. They establish expectations, build capability, recognize progress, address problems, and help new hires see a future with the organization. When this is done right, the rest of the problem becomes exponentially easier to solve.
5. **Volume and performance must be considered together.** The largest recruiting pipelines and trade categories have the greatest effect on total outcomes. Modest improvements in Social Media/Internet recruiting and high-volume production roles could retain substantially more employees than large percentage gains in smaller populations.
6. **Strong retention is achievable.** Many employers are already achieving first-year retention of 80% or higher. Employers using structured practices—particularly World Class First Day, Best Athlete Profile, and Leader New Hire Retention Training with the 5th Metric Scorecard—demonstrate that disciplined execution is associated with stronger outcomes.

What This Means for Employers

Employers should treat recruiting and retention as one connected operating system rather than separate human-resource activities.

This requires employers to:

- **Define success before recruiting.** Establish the behaviors, capabilities, motivations, and working conditions required for an employee to succeed in each role.
- **Set realistic expectations.** Clearly communicate job duties, schedules, physical demands, attendance requirements, workplace conditions, and advancement opportunities before an offer is accepted.
- **Standardize the first-year experience.** Build a structured process that begins before Day 1 and includes an intentional first day, skills training, supervisor check-ins, fit assessments, recognition, and career conversations.
- **Make leaders accountable for retention.** Equip frontline leaders with practical routines for onboarding, coaching, and employee development. Use the **5th Metric Scorecard** as a key management tool to track new-hire progress, reinforce leader accountability, identify emerging risks, and measure first-year retention performance.
- **Use data to target the greatest opportunities.** Analyze outcomes by recruiting source, trade, supervisor, shift, tenure milestone, and departure reason. Prioritize areas where high hiring volume and below-average retention intersect.
- **Act early and remain consistent.** Address attendance, performance, fit, and engagement concerns as soon as they emerge, while continuing structured employee contact beyond the traditional 90-day onboarding period.
- **Learn from what is already working.** Identify high-performing employers, teams, leaders, and trades; determine which practices are producing stronger outcomes; and adapt those practices across the organization.

BOTTOM LINE: THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET. Employers do not improve retention through a single program or recruiting source. They improve it by building a disciplined talent system that selects the right people, prepares them to succeed, equips frontline leaders to support them, and uses first-year data to drive continuous improvement.

INTRODUCING IN 2026-2027

AMERICA'S TALENT PIPELINE PROGRAM



OUR MISSION

America's Talent Pipeline Program **TEAM** will energize and strengthen the American industrial economy by enabling **EMPLOYERS** to build and sustain high-performance talent acquisition and retention operating systems to recruit, hire, onboard, and retain new teammates through their critical 1st year on the job to develop resilient teams; improve business performance and generate the industrial capacity worthy of America's past and ready for our future.

**ONE RELATIONSHIP. ONE EMPLOYER. ONE JOB.
ONE LIFELONG, PRODUCTIVE & ENGAGED TEAMMATE AT A TIME.**

ONE TEAM – ONE FIGHT



